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Sex-spy witness recants testimony

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A key witness in the sex-for-secrets spy scandal has recanted his original statement that Marine Sgt. Clayton Lonetree allowed Soviet agents into the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, a defense attorney said yesterday.

Lawyer Michael Stuhff said Cpl. Robert Williams has withdrawn his statement, claiming he had been "coerced and tricked" by Marine Corps investigators.

Cpl. Williams is one of six Marines who were recalled from Vienna last week for questioning. He originally supported allegations against Sgt. Lonetree made by Cpl. Arnold Bracy, who has also been charged with espionage and illegal contact with Soviet women.

Earlier, Cpl. Bracy recanted his statement, which reportedly led to the charges of espionage against Sgt. Lonetree.

"Cpl. Williams was threatened in terms of his future Marine Corps career and his future ability to find a job outside of the corps," Mr. Stuhff said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Stuhff said Cpl. Williams had been allowed to sleep only four hours out of a 20-hour period of investigation and was told "that if he walked out of the [interrogation] room, he would be over with."

Cpl. Williams made his allegations against the Marine Corps

Thursday in Qunatico, Va., prior to testifying in a closed proceeding to determine if Sgt. Lonetree would be tried by a court-martial, Mr. Stuhff said.

He said chief Marine prosecutor Maj. Dave Beck had told him last Wednesday that Cpl. Williams was repudiating his earlier statements.

A Marine Corps spokesman declined comment on Mr. Stuhff's remarks, noting the proceedings against Sgt. Lonetree are closed.

Mr. Stuhff said Cpl. Williams' change of heart destroyed the Marine Corps' claim that Sgt. Lonetree had allowed Soviet agents to roam the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in ex-

change for sexual favors.

"There is really no evidence at all against Lonetree in regards to those allegations, which we have always claimed are false," he said. "There is no physical evidence to support them; there is no credible testimony."

But Mr. Stuhff stopped short of saying the withdrawal of Cpl. Williams' statement would completely undermine the case against Sgt. Lonetree.

The statement referred to "a lot of different things," he said. "Some of these are certainly open to interpretation. But it is now much more difficult to continue the prosecution against these young Marines."

In addition to Sgt. Lonetree and Cpl. Bracy, Sgt. John Weirick, who served at the U.S. Consulate in Leningrad in 1981 and 1982, is being

held on suspicion of espionage.

A fourth Marine, Staff Sgt. Robert Stuffbeam, has been charged with not reporting his contacts with Soviet women. Sgt. Stuffbeam was at one time second-in-command of the Marine guards at the embassy in Moscow.

Administration officials, meanwhile, are saying that up to 50 of the 100 Soviet women employed by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow until last fall were agents of the Soviet KGB intelligence service.

They included a KGB colonel, identified only as "Galya," who was in a position to provide the KGB with detailed assessments of U.S. diplomats and staff who might be vulnerable to recruitment or compromise by the Soviet secret service, one official said.

Galya, who was employed by the

embassy for 20 years, reportedly was able to identify U.S. agents stationed in Moscow as diplomats, the official said. Their frequent travel outside Moscow was arranged through Galya.

She developed a reputation as an important Soviet contact for U.S. diplomats "because she was efficient, and in Moscow the ones who were efficient were almost always KGB," the official said.

William Kunstler, also an attorney for Sgt. Lonetree, said a photograph submitted as evidence against his client shows another woman U.S. officials believe is a KGB colonel named "Raya." The woman was photographed at an embassy party escorted by a Marine security guard.

Marine officials said the photograph could not be released since it is part of closed court proceedings.